

126 into English as the informants gave their life histories, although I never felt sufficiently secure in the language to dispense with the translation into Malay which Fentan, the interpreter, furnished. Myths and other tales were recorded in Alor and given interlinear translations in English which I later checked with Fentan in Malay. Certainly the linguistic handicaps were great and only incessant care reduced the possibilities of gross errors.

125 With the completion of the house, the village united me in discharging the obligations of a house-building feast. The slaughter of two pigs and a goat clearly indicated that this was a house deserving a lineage name. At the all-night dance preceding the feast, the chief, after considerable deliberation with me, decided Hamerika was suitable. Here a peculiar linguistic feature entered. When I was asked the name of my lineage, I said that I came from America. In Alor this name means "your" Merica and became a gracious gesture of hospitality to the chief. He then called the house "her" Merica (Hamerika). My nation and their lineage concepts were all satisfactorily blended, unfortunately through sheer misunderstanding.

A daily "clinic" served further to acquaint me with the people and, more importantly, to acquaint the people with me. My first patient was Rikapah the Sor. By good luck two old ulcers healed rapidly under daily treatment and thereafter we exchanged the courtesies of two medical specialists. He sent me people with wounds, infections, fevers, and intestinal ailments. I sent him people who needed charms or cures for supernatural ills. Daily I bathed infections, dispensed quinine or castor oil or opium, and gradually even the women and children were sufficiently used to my touch to forgive me the size of my body, the whiteness of my skin, and the blue eyes, which looked so frighteningly blind to them. That my nose was long and sharp was, however, to the very end of my stay, a never-ending source of merriment. That I took no offense at their amusement they discovered only later and to the considerable relief of the older persons concerned with the proprieties.

Gradually life assumed a familiar and intimate character, as it will in any village the world over. The Dutch on the coast rarely entered my mind, except twice a month when one of the boys went to meet the mail boat and make small purchases at the Chinese store. The people of Atimeling no longer found me their chief source of entertainment, and, although I could never wander about unnoticed, at least I was ignored when engrossing matters were afoot. My awkwardness in handling a betel quid was always a chance for diversion. The chum-